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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
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DRAFT REPORT

Addendum

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PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

1. The Committee considered the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 at its 15th to 34th meetings, from 12 to 25 June 1996, during the first part of its thirty-sixth session.
2. At the 15th meeting, on 12 June 1996, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, on behalf of the Secretary-General, introduced the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 (A/51/6). At the same meeting, the Controller made a statement.
3. The Committee considered and analysed all 25 programmes of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 at its 16th to 34th meetings, from 12 to 25 June 1996. The Committee decided to revert to consideration of the draft report of the Committee on the 25 programmes of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 at the second part of its thirty-sixth session.

General considerations

Discussion

4. Many delegations deeply regretted that the new format did not follow the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation



(ST/SGB/PPBME Rules/1 (1987)), approved by the General Assembly in its resolutions 37/234 and 38/227, nor did it strictly follow the guidelines recommended by the Committee.

5. Many delegations regretted that the Secretariat did not take fully into account previous decisions of the Committee on the inclusion in the subprogrammes of all mandated activities. Other delegations recalled the view that the listing of activities was recognized to be one of the shortcomings in the current medium-term plan.

6. Some delegations welcomed the congruence between programmatic and organizational structures to enhance accountability and responsibility; each programme would be carried out by one department or office and each subprogramme would be implemented by an organizational unit within the department or office, generally at the level of a division. One delegation noted that the programme for Africa would be implemented by three different offices. Other delegations expressed a preference for a sectoral approach and in that context observed that the format of the medium-term plan had yet to be approved.

7. Some delegations welcomed the efforts made to formulate objectives more clearly and precisely. Other delegations expressed reservations on the general nature of the objectives and the lack of quantifiable targets and expressed the view that efforts should continue to be made to improve further the formulation of the medium-term plan.

8. Many delegations expressed the view that legislative mandates should be indicated in the narrative of the programmes, while others preferred the legislative mandates to be listed in an annex to the respective programmes. Other delegations requested the Secretary-General to review legislative mandates in accordance with article III, rule 103.2 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, and in this connection, recalled that in accordance with its terms of reference (Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX)), the Committee should assess the continuing validity of legislative decisions of more than five years' standing.

9. Many delegations deeply regretted the fact that the Secretariat had not provided certain information repeatedly requested by them during the debate. Those delegations requested that such information be provided to the Committee during the second part of its thirty-sixth session.

Conclusions

10. The Committee recalled General Assembly decision 50/452 of 22 December 1995, in which the Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to begin preparation of the medium-term plan on the basis of recommendations of the Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and taking into account views expressed by Member States in the Fifth Committee.

11. The Committee reiterated the importance Member States attached to the medium-term plan, which constituted the principal policy directive of the United Nations and provided the framework for the biennial programme budgets, recalling

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and reiterating the importance of General Assembly resolutions 37/234, 38/227, 41/213 and 48/218 A and decision 50/452 and the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation and bearing in mind paragraph 13 below. The Committee also recalled its terms of reference in Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX).

12. The Committee stressed the importance of ensuring that the medium-term plan reflected all mandated programmes and activities and agreed that legislative mandates for the work to be carried out should be included in the approved version of the plan.

13. The Committee agreed that if the new format of the medium-term plan were adopted, it would be necessary, as recommended by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/49/958), to amend, as appropriate, the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, which govern the preparation of the medium-term plan.

14. The Committee agreed with the view of the Secretary-General that efforts to ensure that the United Nations of the twenty-first century was equipped to rise to the challenges of that century depended on, above all, continuous, predictable and assured political and financial support from Member States.

Perspective

Discussion

15. Many delegations deeply regretted that the Secretary-General had not observed the structure of the perspective contained in document A/51/6 (Perspective) as recommended by the Committee, namely the presentation of five distinct sections dealing with persistent problems, emerging trends, challenges to be faced by the international community, the role of the Organization and the directions to be pursued. Some delegations expressed the view that the perspective was a well-written, thoughtful, balanced and succinct document, providing a clear over-arching statement on the work and role of the Organization.

16. Many delegations expressed the view that the perspective was not balanced in reflecting the interests of all Member States, nor did it accurately address the concerns of developing countries. The perspective did not give sufficient weight to the role of the Organization in economic and social development. They were also of the view that some of the terminology used was inappropriate since no consensus had yet been reached on many of the concepts described; furthermore, they pointed out that the perspective had omitted other important emerging trends, as well as a number of issues that were of major importance for the developing countries.

17. Many delegations noted that the perspective was forward-looking and policy-oriented, addressing persistent problems, emerging trends and many of the issues that were under consideration by the international community. They also

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noted that the Secretary-General had taken into account the views expressed by the Committee at its previous sessions and by Member States in the Fifth Committee, as well as recommendations and views of Member States at other international forums.

18. Some delegations supported the idea that when discussing future trends, the perspective should include the objective of achieving greater democratization of the Organization's work and the composition of some of its bodies, particularly the Security Council. Other delegations felt that the composition of principal organs of the Organization were not within the purview of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

19. Many delegations stressed the importance of reflecting the principles embodied in the Charter, the need to translate accurately all mandates given by the General Assembly and the need to respect national sovereignty. They emphasized that the role of the Organization could not be selective and must reflect the entire membership. Many delegations regretted that there appeared to be no relation between the perspective and the current medium-term plan.

20. Some delegations stressed the need to bear in mind that resources were finite and that the Organization could not and should not be expected to solve all the world's problems. Many delegations stressed the need to ensure that the Organization was provided with an adequate level of resources for the implementation of its legislative mandates and urged Member States to fulfil their financial obligations in full, on time and without conditions.

21. Many delegations requested that the perspective should be rewritten to incorporate all the concerns of developing countries and to take into account more fully the consensus reached in the Fiftieth Anniversary Declaration.

22. Some delegations did not consider it appropriate, nor practical, to request the Secretary-General to rewrite the perspective. They believed that the Secretary-General had the right to express his views which, they considered, took into account the challenges currently facing the international community. Some delegations were of the view that the Secretary-General's perspective was consistent with the expressions of Member States in the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 50/6). They also noted that the terminology used in the perspective could be found in the recommendations of major international conferences and had been used in the deliberations of the Economic and Social Council and the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly, as well as in several working groups that were currently taking place on the agenda for development and the agenda for peace.

23. Many delegations emphasized that economic and social development must remain a priority of the Organization and regretted that the Secretary-General had not proposed priorities. Other delegations felt that the perspective had identified broad priority areas by means of the emphasis given by the Secretary-General to the need to promote peace and security, economic and social development and human rights, to respond effectively to humanitarian emergencies and to encourage respect for and the progressive development of international law. Furthermore, they pointed out that given the difficulty Member States had

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in agreeing on priorities, the Secretary-General could not be expected to be more specific.

24. Many delegations jointly presented their views relating to the perspective. They rejected the perspective, expressed the view that it should be rewritten and in that context presented guidelines for the elaboration of the new perspective of the medium-term plan and requested that the document containing the guidelines be included in the report of the Committee.

25. Some delegations attached importance to the statement made by the Controller on 12 June 1996 in which he had set out a series of broad priorities. Other delegations felt that the Controller's statement had not been intended to set out broad priorities for the Committee's consideration.

Conclusion

26. The Committee was unable to reach agreement on the content of document A/51/6 (Perspective) and consequently was not able to consider the document, as submitted, as an integral part of the medium-term plan. It therefore requested that the Secretary-General be asked to present to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, through the second part of the thirty-sixth session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, a short and concise document to be considered for inclusion in the proposed medium-term plan outlining the broad areas of priority for the period of the medium-term plan, based on the relevant resolutions and decisions of the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations, taking into account the views expressed by Member States as reflected in paragraphs 15 to 25 above.
